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Overview of Apprenticeship and On-The-Job Training Partnership: South Carolina Commission on Higher Education State Approving Agency, Apprenticeship Carolina and South Carolina Department of Employment Workforce Outreach Collaboration

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education State Approving Agency (SAA) acts on behalf of the Federal Government to evaluate educational/vocational institutions and training establishments. The SAA approves programs where veterans and those eligible for VA education benefits (under Title 38, US Code, Chapters 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, and Title 10 US Code, Chapter 1606 and 1607) can achieve quality training for either an educational, professional, or vocational objective. The focus of the SAA is the review, evaluation, and approval of quality programs under both State and Federal criteria.

South Carolina employment facilities that participate in the Department of Veterans Affairs On-the-Job Training program (DVA-OJT) will contact the SAA, and in turn, the SAA will provide information about the approval process to employers to ensure they have a good working knowledge of what is expected of the establishment and the veteran during the enrollment period. If an employer chooses not to participate in the DVA-OJT program, the veteran will not be able to receive VA benefits.

An approved active facility/employer represents at least one veteran enrolled in the DVA-OJT program that received VA benefits for a specified timeframe. Generally, the specified timeframe runs each year from May through April. A facility/employer will become inactive if no veteran received VA benefits during the aforementioned timeframe in the DVA-OJT program. From May 1, 2014 through April 30, 2015, there were 279 employers with 226 various training programs/occupations approved for the DVA-OJT program. Of the 279 employers approved for the DVA-OJT program, there are 68 employers that are active participants. As of April 25, 2016, the SAA has enrolled 303 veterans in the DVA-OJT program.

The SAA, in partnership with Apprenticeship Carolina, assists inactive facilities and new employers to become registered apprenticeship facilities to participate in the DVA-OJT program. Further, the SAA collaborates with the South Carolina Department of Employment Workforce (SCDEW) to promote the DVA-OJT program through various outreach methods via monthly and quarterly presentations and job fairs throughout the State to inform employers, veterans and their dependents.

The DVA-OJT/Apprenticeship Carolina partnership could potentially be viewed as an outreach opportunity for South Carolina employers and veterans. There are four (4) potential benefits employers could receive in becoming a registered apprenticeship establishment with the United States Department of Labor and approved for the DVA-OJT program:

- Highly-skilled workforce
- State tax credit (up to \$1,000 per employee up to four years)
- Standardized training

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- Reduced turnover - as veterans earn wages while learning a skill in the DVA-OJT program, they are also paid a monthly stipend (VA benefits) from the DVA during the approved training time for the program.